

NEWS

for immediate release



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July 23, 1999

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MARICOPA COUNTY NOW ACCEPTS COMPLAINTS ON SMOKING VEHICLES VIA E-MAIL

The public now can e-mail smoking vehicle complaints to Maricopa County's Environmental Services Department (MCESD).

With the Internet's increased popularity, the Department expanded access to its newly established Smoking Vehicle Program by setting up a direct e-mail address: www.maricopa.gov/sbeap/smoknveh.htm. Through this voluntary program, individuals can either call Maricopa County's Environmental Response Line at (602) 506-6616 or send an e-mail to report smoking vehicles. The callers' identity remains confidential.

E-mail complainants must provide the smoking vehicle's license plate number and press the "send" button for the reporting agency to receive the document.

The program identifies the vehicle's registered owner, using the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicle's records, and sends a letter to the owner recommending the vehicle be checked and to make necessary repairs to reduce excessive smoke.

Emissions from motor vehicles are the number one source of air pollution in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

There are no penalties or fines placed on the owner who is reported to the hotline. However, driving an excessive smoking vehicle is a violation of Arizona Revised Statute §28-955B, which states, "The engine and power mechanism of every motor vehicle shall be so equipped and adjusted as to prevent the escape of excessive fumes or smoke." Therefore, a law enforcement officer may cite drivers of such vehicles. Voluntary efforts in correcting the problem are critical to reducing air pollution.

Since MCESD assumed the program from the state in May of 1999, more than 300 letters are mailed weekly to car owners.